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ABSTRACT

A practicum was designed to increase the amount of time parents read to their kindergarten children. Fifteen parents in a suburban area participated in a series of teacher-presented workshops to discover the value of reading aloud, learn strategies for presenting literature, and practice reading aloud to their children. All seven of the behavioral objectives of the practicum were achieved. Fifteen of the target group members were able to list three values of reading aloud, give three strategies for presenting literature, list two questioning techniques, and show an increase in the amount of time spent reading aloud to their child by 30 minutes per week. The other three objectives were achieved with higher results than expected. Thirteen of the 15 parents accompanied their child to the school or public library five times during the program, 11 out of the 15 parents showed an increased enthusiasm of two points for reading aloud on the posttest, and nine of the participants' children showed an increased enthusiasm of five points for being read to aloud. Such results indicated that presenting workshops for parents will help them increase the amount of time they read aloud to their children. The presentation of the workshops enhanced parents' knowledge of reading aloud. This prompted the increase in the amount of time that parents read to their children. (Nine tables of data are included. Nineteen references and seven appendixes, including the survey, questionnaires, pre- and posttests and enthusiasm rating point scales used, are attached.) (MG)

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INCREASING THROUGH WORKSHOPS THE AMOUNT OF TIME KINDERGARTEN PARENTS READ TO THEIR CHILDREN

by

Terry A. Rustin

Cluster 30

A Practicum presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1989

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Terry A. Rustin under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

12-20-89
Date of Final Approval of Report

Georgianna Lowen, Ed.D.
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ABSTRACT

Increasing Through Workshops the Amount of Time Kindergarten Parents Read to Their Children. Rustin, Terry A., 1989: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program Early and Middle Childhood. Descriptions: Reading Aloud to Others/Parent Participation/Oral Reading/Parent Role/Reading Instruction/Kindergarten/Story Telling

This practicum was designed to increase the amount of time kindergarten parents read to their children. The writer administered a general survey and a kindergarten parent questionnaire which demonstrated a need for the program.

This goal was to be accomplished through the presentation of workshops. A series of six workshops were then presented to the participating parents. Parent and community workers read to a kindergarten class as well. Visits to the school and community libraries took place. A final post-test was developed to assess the mastery of specific information presented during the workshops.

The results of this practicum were extremely positive. Analysis of the data showed that the amount of time that the participants read to their children was increased. The evaluation also indicated that the participants thought the program was a worthwhile one.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community and Work Setting

The practicum plan was implemented in a suburban area. The establishment was erected in 1967 and was originally designed as an "open" school. It has since been renovated to accommodate the "traditional" style of teaching, i.e., self-contained classrooms. In addition to the main structure, there are three portables used for art and music classes, an alternative education class, and speech classes.

The student body is currently made up of children who come from primarily middle-class families. The ethnic composition of the school consists of Caucasians (in the majority), Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians. The population is somewhat transient, in that 19 percent of the students withdrew during the school term last year and a 16 percent influx of new students registered in that time.

The philosophy of the school is to stress the basics in order for all students to have the foundation necessary for future learning to take place. This task is accomplished by the teachers through adaptation of instruction to meet students' needs. The school also meets these needs on a broader scale by hosting a variety of exceptional programs

which include: Specific Learning Disabilities, Alternative Education classes, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy classes.

Increased developmental considerations in the primary program are becoming of great importance. The developmental point of view set forth by the county is utilized in decision-making regarding kindergarten and prefirst retention. Each year since the developmental strategy has been implemented, the need for the prefirst program has been substantiated. This need has been successfully recognized and met for the past five years and will continue as part of the primary program at the school.

The prefirst program is aided tremendously by the school's primary specialist. Also on the staff is a principal, three secretaries, a guidance counselor, an Exceptional Student Education (ESE) specialist, a part-time music and art teacher, and a part-time computer instructor. There are 31 classroom teachers as well as seven non-instructional classroom aides.

Writer's Role

The writer's role in the school is that of a kindergarten teacher. Her primary goal set forth by the

school is to provide a comfortable learning environment in which the students may attain the foundation for learning upon which to build in later years. A portion of the curriculum is mandated by the county through a minimum basic skills checklist. The skills cover the areas of reading, writing, and math. In order to be considered for promotion to the next grade, a child must show 90 percent mastery of each of the skill areas.

The 30 skills to be tested are divided into three parts. The first 10 are tested during the first grading period; the next 10 are taught and evaluated during the second nine week period; and the last 10 skills are tested during the third quarter of the school year.

Many of the skills are presented in a small group setting. The other skills are introduced in a large group setting. The tasks are practiced daily for several weeks. Then the students are tested. As with the presentation of the skills, the testing also allows for an individual, a small group, and a large group setting. If a student does not pass a minimum basic skill, he/she will be remediated individually by the teacher.

Aside from these minimal mandates, the majority of the curriculum is determined by the four kindergarten teachers working as a team. Topics and additional skills to be

taught are determined at the beginning of the school year and are discussed and updated throughout the term. Once the general plan has been decided, each teacher has the freedom to develop the units of study as fully as she wishes.

The units of study range from holidays to nutrition to ocean life. They encompass many skill areas on a kindergarten level. A typical unit of study will have a theme, perhaps "insects." All of the activities presented during that week of study will relate to insects. For instance, a math activity may involve using ladybug counters to help with addition skills (math); a story may be presented about a fly which will become the word for the week (reading); watercolor paints may be used to paint a butterfly (art); caterpillars may be developed to turn into butterflies (science); a bumblebee game may be played to match the bee with a capital letter to its corresponding lowercase letter on a honeycomb (language arts); and as a culminating activity, the students may take a field trip to a butterfly garden to gain more information about insects.

During the units of study, skills are obtained. This academic progress is supervised throughout the school year by the kindergarten teacher. Developmental progress is monitored as well. Observations made by the teacher will determine the child's placement for the following year. The

school's Primary Specialist and the county's Early Education Testing Team will collaborate with the kindergarten teacher to aid in these placement decisions.

Another responsibility of the kindergarten teacher is to hold conferences. Each student's parent must attend a conference a minimum of two times a year as mandated by the county's school board. The meetings provide the teacher with the opportunity to learn more about her students. First-hand, in-depth information about the child may be gained from the parent. This information can help the instructor meet the needs of her pupils on an individual basis.

Conferences also provide a time in which the teacher may explain her teaching strategies to parents. This allows parents to become aware of the specific educational process in which their child is participating. Keeping parents current on school activities allows them to take a more active role in their child's education.

Children's academic and developmental progress are also discussed at conferences. If a student is experiencing difficulty with a particular skill, the parent can be informed immediately. Specific activities can be explained to the parent to use in the home to help develop the skill. Enrichment activities can also be offered for those children

who are performing above average.

All in all, the role of kindergarten teacher encompasses the total child. Academic observations are made as well as developmental, physical, social, and emotional observations. While providing a stress-free environment in which the students can learn, the kindergarten teacher is also taking an important part in each child's life. Often times the teacher spends more time with a child than his/her parents do. Therefore, there is a tremendous responsibility to present a strong, yet loving role model to these children.

The writer has presented such a role to approximately 125 children. She has been in the teaching field for the past five years.

When in college, she decided to complete her internship requirements at a school with which she was familiar; the school she had attended as a child. She interned at the prefirst grade level for several months. Following this period the writer was offered a job as a prefirst aide. The position was accepted and held until the end of the school year. The principal then offered a first grade position which was accepted without hesitation.

During this first year of teaching, the writer joined a beginning teacher program mandated by the county. The

program consisted of several workshops, classroom observations and evaluation periods with the principal and a peer teacher. The experiences were invaluable and created a firm foundation upon which to build.

The following year the school's enrollment increased a great deal. As a result, another kindergarten class was to be formed. The writer, having always longed to teach kindergarten, immediately accepted the offer from the principal. This position has been held for the past four years.

In order to obtain this teaching position, the writer had to earn a Bachelor's Degree in Education. She chose to attend a private four-year college and graduated with a degree in Early Childhood/Elementary Education; this would allow her to teach in grades kindergarten through sixth.

After teaching for a year, the writer enrolled in the Master's Program at a local college. The school offered a chance for people who hold full time jobs to attend classes on Saturdays while working toward their degrees. In two years, all the requirements for Master's of Science were complete.

The writer then inquired about Doctoral classes at the school. There were no programs starting at that time, so she had to wait until the following year. Having

participated in the program for a year, the writer has two more years until the degree of Doctorate of Education can be confirmed.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Reading has become somewhat of a political issue in recent years. A concerned public has forced administrators to take an interest in their reading programs. If reading were accepted by the school, the home and the community as a high priority subject, the achievements of children would be relatively high but if parents and the community felt that reading was the responsibility of the school alone, the achievement of children would be adversely affected (Benedict, 1982). It seems that many parents do not spend much time reading to their children; at least this was true for the writer's kindergarten class. Of the 25 children in the class, 20 of their parents did not read aloud to them. These children were not being allowed to benefit from the reading experience.

The practice of reading aloud to children was not new. For years teachers and librarians have promoted the value of reading aloud; the idea just never seemed to "catch on." Now there seems to be a renewed interest and people are re-examining the effects of reading aloud on children.

Reading to children at a young age affords the

opportunity to be exposed to written words and the rhythm of reading. This exposure may aid in the reading process later. These early years seemed to have been characterized by a joyful and receptive enthusiasm for learning which should be taken advantage of by adults. Twenty kindergarten children in the writer's class were missing out on this opportunity.

The 20 children were affected by the problem; they were not being permitted to increase their academic skills through reading aloud. Seven of the 20 children who were not read to were experiencing difficulty with beginning letter sounds, rhyming skills and vocabulary growth. Perhaps these skills could have been aided if the children were read to at a younger age. Rhyming skills could have been increased by hearing stories which flow and rhyme. Vocabulary increases could have occurred from reading any type of literature from nursery rhymes to adventure stories.

Some parents did not realize that many skills could have been learned through reading aloud. Lautenschlager and Hertz (1984) showed that reading aloud to children stimulated their interest, their emotional development, their imagination and their language development. Reading aloud prepared children for understanding written language; it developed listening skills; it expanded children's

experiences; and it provided a pleasurable experience.

The children's parents were also affected by the problem. They were letting pass by opportune moments of sharing with their children. Seventeen of the 20 parents worked at full time jobs and did not have an overabundance of time to spend with their families. If they had read aloud to their children, parents could have offered a few minutes of individual attention that may have seemed like hours to the children. Parents could have used this time to enjoy their families and to take a break from their hectic schedules.

Lack of reading aloud time affected teachers as well as children and parents. Listening skills of students who were not read to may have been below their potential. Thus, attention spans were low and class directions may not have been followed. More time may have been spent repeating instructions as opposed to teaching new information.

The problem of the lack of time spent reading aloud to children was a problem that has been solved by many people. School-wide as well as individually focused programs have been instituted throughout the country. The programs ranged from simple and basic to elaborate and detailed. The problem had never been addressed in the writer's kindergarten class though. The writer was unaware of the

problem; she assumed that the majority of her students were read to by their parents.

Parents can establish an attitude toward reading by giving books an important place in their daily lives as well as in the lives of their children. Parents who regularly read books and newspapers communicate that reading is a valued experience. They also establish a role model for their children to emulate. Most children want to do as their parents do so they copy their actions in hopes of approval. When praise is given, many children repeat the action.

Parents have an incredible power over children. It can be used to create a secure, safe environment in which to read. The feelings fostered during these moments could last a life time. The parents of the kindergartners could have used this power to aid in their children's growth. There was a need for increased amount of time that kindergarten parents read to their children.

Problem Documentation

A general survey (Appendix A) was distributed to 50 random participants at the writer's school. Their ages ranged from 23 to 42 years. There were 29 females and 21

males surveyed. The participants had children aged four through 13 years. In answering the question, "Do you read aloud to your children?", nine answered positively while 41 responded negatively. With this result, the problem was proven to exist. How often they read was also addressed (see Table 1).

Table 1

General Survey Results of Reading Aloud to Children and How Often

General Survey	
Once a Week	3
Twice/Three Times a Week	5
Every Day	1

To further substantiate the need for a program, the writer distributed a questionnaire to 25 of her kindergarten parents (Appendix B). Their ages ranged from 25 to 36 years. Twelve females and 13 males responded. The results demonstrated that five parents did read aloud to their children and 20 parents did not. The five parents who responded positively read to their children two or three

times a week. The other parents were asked to submit reasons why they did not read (see Table 2).

Table 2

Reasons Parents Did Not Read Aloud to Children

Kindergarten Survey	
Lack of Time	17
Lack of Interest in Reading	6
Did Not See Value	1
No Response	1

The results demonstrated a definite need for a reading aloud program. The target group was determined by asking for volunteers interested in a program to promote reading aloud. Of the 25 parents surveyed, 15 responded positively, thus they became the target group.

Causative Analysis

There were several reasons that parents did not read to their children. As demonstrated in the general survey and kindergarten parent questionnaire, three of the main reasons

were as follows: lack of time, lack of interest in reading and lack of knowledge of the values of reading aloud.

It did seem that the only time that the family gathered together was likely to be when parents were tired and needed some time to themselves. Parents spent the day working at their jobs and then came home to face more responsibilities: preparing dinner, doing laundry, cleaning the house, and reading to their children. Although it was difficult to change established household patterns, it should and could be done (Kimmel and Segal, 1983).

Parents as well as children needed to make time for reading aloud. Many children were avid television viewers and preferred to passively watch a television program rather than be actively involved in a storybook. In order for reading aloud to have been successful, parents took a stand against unlimited television viewing.

Kimmel and Segal (1983) have demonstrated several benefits of reading aloud as opposed to watching television: (1) television watching was less personal than a family member reading a story, (2) when listening to a story, children automatically created mental images of the scenes described and developed imagination, (3) television segments developed a short attention span due to their limited length, and (4) watching television was usually not a shared

family experience as reading was.

Another reason parents did not read to their children was due to a lack of interest on their part. Many of these parents were not avid readers thus, modeling this behavior to their children. Research (Kimmel and Segal, 1983) suggests that children who had adult models who read for pleasure learned to read easily and remained good readers throughout their school years. With this knowledge, parents realized that their actions do influence their children's behavior. As Lautenschlager and Hertz (1984) found, pleasurable literary experiences that were made a natural part of the environment were likely to enhance positive attitudes in children toward reading.

As shown on the results of the kindergarten parent questionnaire, one parent did not realize the skills that his child was missing out on. He wrote that he did not see the purpose (other than pleasure) of reading aloud. The numerous values were evidently undiscovered.

Another cause of the problem was parents' lack of interest in reading. Six of the 25 parents in the writer's class expressed their own disinterest in reading. They never had adult role models who read to them regularly. The six parents never read any books or magazines or even the newspaper regularly.

The final reason for the kindergarten parents not reading aloud to their children was the lack of time. Seventeen of the 25 parents surveyed felt this was the cause of their not reading to their children. Many stated that they did not have enough time because when they got home from work they ate dinner, their child took a bath and watched television, then he/she went to bed. Some parents felt that by the time they were relaxed and settled down for the evening, they were too tired to read to their children or their children were too tired to be read to.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Books can play a significant role in the lives of young children. The parents though are the people who determine to what extent. Parents and teachers are responsible for providing literary experiences for their children. Research suggests (Brown, 1986) that home story reading by parents may be more effective in stimulating literary experiences than group story reading at school.

Early childhood is a time when children explore and discover. They are acquiring language which is the most important tool as an instrument of learning (Butler, 1980). The early years are the time that reading to children can be extremely beneficial. Since they cannot as yet read on

their own, they need to see the adults in their lives modeling reading behavior for them. The early exposure to language will have a lasting effect on children. Language is in the center of the stage as far as learning and intelligence are concerned (Butler, 1980). Since thought depends upon language, then the quality of an individual's thought will depend upon the quality of his language. The more complex language found in books may effect children's language growth for the better. When looking at a book or talking about the pictures, children are actively taking part in language. This active act is much more beneficial to language development than passive listening.

In a recent study (Robinson, 1984), it was suggested that materials other than books may also stimulate language growth. Reading the caption under a newspaper picture can add to a child's vocabulary. Signs on the highway or on passing vehicles can become avenues of learning. Printed materials that many people take for granted can offer children stimulating ways to develop prereading skills.

In addition to increasing language skills, Johnson (1983) found that reading aloud can help in the development of listening skills. Listening is an important activity for learning, and one for which many children need help. Reading aloud to children offers them the opportunity to

understand spoken language by listening.

Other opportunities are afforded by reading aloud as well. Books allow children to view different characters and situations to which they may not otherwise be exposed. Encounters that book characters have may help children go through a similar experience more easily (Butler, 1980). Children relate to characters and their situations while empathizing and vicariously realizing their joys and pains. Becoming familiar with people who share similar happenings also helps children develop an appreciation of self and others (Stahlschmidt and Johnson, 1984).

Reading aloud to children can also afford the opportunity to live the events of the past, present and future. Textbooks present facts, but literature allows the listener to feel what others feel and participate in situations rather than just observe them. Events in characters' lives also expose children to a range of moral values (Stewig, 1980). These values can be discussed and similarities and differences in viewpoints may be highlighted as well.

Children may become attached to certain characters thus yielding favorite stories. Fagan and Hayden (1988) compared children's attention to print when presented with favorite and unfamiliar stories. They concluded that favorite

stories allow children to become more involved in the story and attend to the print, thus aiding in the prereading process.

Reading aloud to children can help children's prereading skills. The reader must follow certain rules though, in order to allow for the most successful experience. Johnson (1983) offers several tips for readers: (1) **maintain eye contact** - looking at the children makes the story more personal and lengthens attention spans; (2) **have a regular read-aloud time** - since reading has a calming effect, after an active event would be an opportune time for story time; (3) **be aware of your voice** - adjust volume, pitch, and tone while reading with expression; (4) **make the activity pure listening** - poor listening habits should not be encouraged by allowing the children to draw or do other work while reading; and (5) **adjust story time to fit the children's attention spans** - 10 - 20 minutes is usually about right.

Many teachers use these tips in their daily reading routines. Parents can use them too. In fact, in a recent study (Juliebo, 1985) it was shown that literacy growth is a result of literary activities in the home rather than at school. Furthermore, Morrow (1983) suggests that high reading-interest kindergarten children were read to more

frequently at home than low reading-interest children. With such supportive research, the need for parents reading to their children is justifiably substantial.

Parents too can gain from the read aloud experience. Benedict (1982) found that reading programs can strengthen family interactions. Twenty minutes of uninterrupted reading time a day may be more time than was ever spent involved in a family activity. This time can offer a physical (sitting on parent's lap) and an emotional closeness. The time to start this process is during infancy. The National Council of Teachers of English (1980) suggest that tiny babies respond to being read to and will look at the book's pictures. This early exposure to books may instill a lasting love of literature.

If children are not exposed to books early in life, perhaps they will never enjoy their unlimited pleasures. In a 1982 survey (Coughlin) of middle-class adults aged 18 to 59, six percent of those interviewed reported never reading anything at all; not even the newspaper. Of the 94 percent who were reading, 39 percent never read a book and of the 55 percent book readers, only 33 percent reported reading one book a month. These statistics show that the belief that reading is a worthwhile activity was apparently not fostered in those surveyed.

Teachers and parents must work together to provide children with reading experiences that accentuate the value of reading. If reading is viewed as worthwhile, perhaps more children will partake in this wondrous opportunity.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The goal for the practicum was that the amount of time spent reading to their kindergarten children by parents would increase. The following objectives were projected for this practicum:

Behavioral Objectives

1. After attending a series of teacher-presented workshops, 15 out of 15 people in the target group will be able to list three values of reading aloud to children as tested on the "It's Fun to Read to Your Kids" (IFRK) post-test.
2. After twelve weeks, 10 out of 15 participants in the target group will have accompanied their child to the public or school library five times as tested on the "It's Fun to Read to Your Kids" post-test.
3. After attending a series of teacher-presented workshops, 15 out of 15 people in the target group will be able to list three strategies

for presenting literature as tested on the "It's Fun to Read to Your Kids" post-test

4. After attending a series of teacher-presented workshops, 15 out of 15 participants in the target group will be able to list two questioning techniques as tested on the IFRK post-test
5. After twelve weeks, 15 out of 15 people in the target group will increase the amount of time they spend reading aloud to their children by 30 minutes per week, as shown in the weekly parent time log.
6. After 12 weeks, 10 out of 15 participants in the target group will show an increased enthusiasm of two points for reading aloud as tested on the IFRK post-test.
7. After 12 weeks, 8 out of 15 of the participants' children will show an increased enthusiasm of 5 points as tested on the Children's Enthusiasm Rating.

Measurement of Objectives

The writer was to keep a journal of the practicum experience used primarily as a guide in knowing if the practicum objectives were being met. The journal was also to serve as a day-to-day update on happenings. The writer was to log children's comments, parents' comments, notes on the workshop series, and any other relevant occurrences.

The journal was to aid in the evaluation of objectives as was the "It's Fun to Read to Your Kids" (IFRK) post-test (Appendix C). The test was designed by the writer and consisted of five questions directly related to the specific program objectives. The IFRK had a limited amount of questions so that the participating parents would not feel overwhelmed by a lengthy test. Another deterrent to possible test anxiety was to present the IFRK as a take-home test to be completed and returned to school within a five-day period.

Specifically, the IFRK was made up of three questions that required the participant to make a list of answers while two other questions required one work answers. The last question on the post-test offered the target group the opportunity to write their feelings about the program, such

as was it worthwhile, what was most valuable, and what was unimportant. This question was to serve as a valuable evaluative tool in determining the usefulness of the entire practicum program. The first five questions were to be compared to the IFRK answer sheet (Appendix D) to see if they were correct.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

Through literature children are exposed to written language at its best (Lehman & Crook, 1988). They can gain the skills necessary for success in reading; but they need to be provided with many opportunities to do so. Reading aloud to children is one way to provide this opportunity. Yet there are many differing views on how it should be approached.

Many reading aloud programs are being used in schools throughout the country. One such program (Holdaway, 1982) offers its students material from children's literature as a replacement for the basal reading series. Teachers find that every reader's needs can be met through the variety of children's books available. A truly individualized reading program can be offered through children's literature. Slower or younger readers can find success in easy-to-read book selections while the more advanced reader can find a challenge in the more arduous writings available.

Variety can also be demonstrated through the use of a story telling program. Children who hear many stories develop a strong motivation for reading. Telling stories or

reading aloud to children helps them develop the idea that reading is a "sense-making" experience instead of an isolated activity involving ditto sheets and workbooks (International Reading Association, 1986).

Cliatt and Shaw (1988) exhibit a story telling program that can be used in two different ways: adults can tell stories to children and children can tell stories to adults or to each other. Stories told by children can lead to written stories which in turn lead to reading motivation. This is how the story time exchange is implemented: first, children hear stories which motivate them to tell stories; their oral stories are then written down; now, children can read their stories to friends; as friends listen, they are encouraged to write their own stories. A knowledgeable teacher can become a catalyst for this story time exchange allowing it to continue in full circle.

The basic program is enhanced by specific suggestions to develop stories further through the use of props. Props add to the story telling experience; they can be used to help children remember a story or to create a concrete way to develop concepts. Several prop enhancers of the program are: catch a character, overhead projector stories, and life-size story characters.

Catch a character involves small characters stuffed

with foam. Inside each one is a magnet. With a magnet fishing pole a child uses the pole to "fish" several characters from the pond and then creates a story. Another child "fishes" their characters out and involves them in the existing story.

The overhead projector stories involve translucent and opaque materials. Characters can be created by using a wide variety of materials such as fabric, lace, and paper. They are cut and shaped into characters and then glued onto a transparency. Stories can be created when the picture is displayed on the overhead projector.

The life-size character idea may very well be the most enjoyable story telling follow-up activity for the children. Life-size cardboard characters are made by cutting a hole for the child's face to show through. The body is then painted onto the cardboard. Each child can put his/her face in the hole and hold the character as he/she acts out the story.

Story telling helps children develop positive attitudes toward learning while also improving reading skills. Oral language ability grows; creativity in making up stories is developed; logical thinking, sequencing, and cause-and-effect reasoning are applied during story telling; and receptive and expressive language skills are developed as

well (Cliatt & Shaw, 1988).

Another read aloud program (Lautenschlager & Hertz, 1984) was instituted in a northern state school district. A staff member spoke to parents at the elementary schools. The speech was enthusiastic and pointed out how reading aloud to children stimulates their interest, their emotional development, their imagination, and their language development.

The parents' positive responses led to the reading teachers of the school getting involved. The reading consultant who spoke with the parents told these teachers about the interest the parents exhibited and gave out materials on reading aloud to children.

The next step of the program involved more educators. The reading teachers, district reading consultant and elementary principals presented workshops for adults interested in learning about the benefits and techniques of reading aloud to children.

The workshops began after widespread public relations efforts. The main format of the gathering began with material distribution and refreshments. After everyone was settled, the principal welcomed the audience and began a videotape about reading aloud to children. After the viewing, several topics were discussed. One major topic was

that parents have great potential. The speaker stressed that parents can lay the foundation for their child's formal reading instruction.

The speaker also touched upon the benefits of reading aloud to children: enjoyment, establishment of closeness, and providing a positive attitude toward reading. The speaker stressed that by hearing a variety of stories children can learn letter sounds, learn to say new words, to understand new word meanings, to develop thinking abilities and to comprehend stories.

The last topic of interest to be discussed at the workshop was how to go about reading to children. Several pointers were given: read in an expressive voice, be sure the child can see the book, let the child turn the pages, and invite the child to talk about the story.

At the end of the evening, a short written evaluation of the program was distributed. The results showed that 30 percent of the participants obtained new ideas from the workshop and planned to use them. Nearly 50 percent already did many of the tips offered. Almost 100 percent would like to see the workshop series continue with further materials.

Due to the enthusiastic responses of the participants, the district plans on presenting additional programs geared to help parents become active partners in developing their

children's reading skills. There is also a plan being developed to distribute reading materials to all parents in the district, not just those attending the workshop.

A Massachusetts school has also recently taken an interest in reading aloud to children. Griffin (1988) implemented a reading program which strengthened the students' language skills, imaginations, and their love of literature. The plan began with teachers including read-aloud time in their daily lesson plans. Then the community was involved. People who children do not consider as "readers" were contacted. The goal was to show the students that adults other than their parents and teachers value the importance of reading.

A wish list was made up by the faculty and students to add to the reading volunteers already contacted. The list ranged from the local mail carrier to the President of the United States. Books were collected from students' homes, the school library, and the newspaper published the event while advertising for more volunteers.

The energy of the volunteers overwhelmed the faculty of the school. The readers carefully selected their books and read with enthusiasm. One volunteer was so involved in the program that he wrote his own story about a horse. To add to the telling of the tale he brought a visual aid -- a real

horse!

A police officer volunteered his time as well. He read to a second grade class. His enthusiasm was displayed through the choice of places to read. Instead of reading to the students in the classroom, he let the children sit in the police van as he read.

The entire week was filled with enjoyment and enthusiasm. Every class in the school had a different reader every day of the week. Since the read aloud program was such a success, the faculty has decided to institute the plan as an annual event.

Description of Selected Solution

All of the read aloud programs presented are worthwhile endeavors. Whether aimed at an entire school district (as was Lautenschlager and Hertz's program) or scaled down to a small class (like Cliatt and Shaw's story telling techniques), the primary goal of reading aloud to children was accomplished.

The literature has shown that reading to children can be an enjoyable experience while at the same time an educational one. Many skills can be learned from oral reading. These skills may be developed through the use of

an elaborate and inventive reading program or by a simple and basic one.

Report of Action Taken

The writer chose to combine aspects of the Lautenschlager and Hertz workshop program and Griffin's community readers program since the results for both were overwhelmingly favorable. The writer's program consisted of six workshops, ten community/parent readers' days, and a field trip to the public library.

Before the first workshop the participants' children were given the Children's Enthusiasm Rating (Appendix E). Measurement was based on the Children's Enthusiasm Rating Point Scale (Appendix F); each question was worth five possible points. The parents rated their enthusiasm for reading aloud on a scale of one to ten on the Parent's Enthusiasm Rating (Appendix G). Next, an overview of the read aloud program was offered and the topic for the evening (values of reading aloud to children) was introduced. Audience participation was encouraged by asking for responses to the question, "Why should you read aloud to your child?" After those responses were considered, information from works of research were shared.

The following values of reading aloud to children were given: reading aloud increases listening skills; can motivate children to read; provides for a "personal time" for parent/child; increases language skills; exposes children to experiences they may never have themselves; provides a good role model; increases children's understanding of the world; and it is an enjoyable experience. Booklets containing the information discussed were distributed at the end of the session.

The topic of the second workshop was: strategies for presenting literature. Specific tips for reading aloud were discussed and demonstrated. The following pointers were selected to be shared: variations in speech tone; become familiar with the material before presentation; pause appropriately to maintain rhythmic quality; create rapport before reading; introduce story; define unfamiliar words; prevent disruptions; and hold the book so the listener can see it. Packets with the presented information were distributed. The topic of making time to read was also discussed. Suggestions for finding time to read were offered by the presenter and other ideas from the participants were encouraged to be shared.

Workshop three allowed time for the parents to practice reading books. The readers critiqued themselves by

commenting on the positive aspects of their performances. There was also a discussion on questioning techniques. The different levels of questioning (literal, interpretive, and critical) were demonstrated.

Parent logs were collected at Workshop Three as well. The logs were designed to allow the participants to keep track of the time they spend reading to their children. The log served as a diary to provide for a "release of emotions." Parents wrote down specific feelings that they experienced, certain pointers they used and if they were successful or not, and a general view of their success throughout the program. The last three workshops took place after the school term was over. These workshops were held in the homes of three of the participants. The fourth workshop provided more practice in reading aloud. The participants brought their children to this workshop. First, they read a story to their own child. Next, they read a story to someone else's child. Then, they critiqued themselves again by stating the positive aspects of their presentation. The fifth workshop was set up the same way as the fourth. The evaluation form was distributed to be completed and returned by the sixth session.

At Workshop Six, the IFRK was collected and the Parent's Enthusiasm Rating and the Children's Enthusiam

Rating were filled out and collected. Three readers read to a small group of children as well. The readers did a self-evaluation and presented it to the rest of the group. There was also award certificates presented in three categories: (1) most increased time reading to children; (2) most fluent reader; and (3) most changed attitude toward reading.

Ten days of the program allowed for readers to visit the writer's kindergarten class. Community workers such as a nurse, a lawyer, and a mailman, as well as the parents participating in the program read to the children. This was done to show the students that reading is important to adults and that people they did not expect to be readers were.

The program also allowed for school library visits. There were three days when the school library was open from 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. and three days when it was open from 7:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. This time allowed for children and their parents together to choose books to read. Picking out books together ensured interest on both of the parties involved.

During the middle of the program the participants and their children took a field trip to the public library. The parents obtained library cards for themselves and for their children. Available programs such as library story

hour and library movie time were explained.

After the last workshop was presented, a newsletter was sent to all participants. It included the program results, their children's responses to the program, a "thank you" from the program presenter, and a bibliography of children's books.

This program of workshops was the most appropriate solution to the lack of reading aloud time being experienced by the participants. It afforded the program presenter the opportunity not only to discuss reading aloud issues, but to demonstrate techniques that may help parents when they read aloud to children.

The parent/community readers portion of the program presented positive role models for the children. It also made them aware that many adults read; even the mailman and the nurse. When the students saw these adults showing such an interest in reading, it made them aware that reading is important.

Another major attraction of this read aloud program was that it was cost effective. Books were checked out free of charge at the school library and public library. A costly program may not have been volunteered for as readily as this one.

All in all, the read aloud program implemented by the

writer was beneficial to all those involved: the parents, the children, and the community.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

Overall, the results of this practicum were favorable. The IFRK post-test showed that Behavioral Objective No. 1 was attained. Fifteen out of 15 target group members were able to list three values of reading aloud (see Table 3).

Table 3

Values of Reading Aloud

	Listed Three Values
Projected	15
Results	15

The second objective projected that 10 out of 15 parents would accompany their child to the school or public library five times during the program. The results of the IFRK showed that 13 out of the 15 parents achieved this

goal (see Table 4).

Table 4

Accompanying Children to the Library

	Visited Library at Least Five Times
Projected	10
Results	13

Discussions at workshop presentations proved to be valuable in relation to Behavioral Objective No. 3. The objective stated that 15 out of 15 people in the target group would be able to list three strategies for presenting literature. The IFRK results show this to be true (see Table 5).

Table 5

Strategies for Presenting Literature

	Listed Three Strategies
Projected	15
Results	15

Just as the third objective was met, so was the fourth. Fifteen out of 15 participants were able to list two questioning techniques as tested on the IFRK post-test (see Table 6).

Table 6

Questioning Techinques

	Listed Two Questioning Techniques
Projected	15
Results	15

Behavioral Objective No. 5 suggested that 15 out 15 participants in the target group show an increase in the amount of time spent reading aloud to their child by 30 minutes per week (see Table 7).

Table 7

Comparison of the Amount of Time Spent Reading Aloud

	Target Group
Time Spent Before Program	7
Time Spent After Program	38

Note. There were 15 members in the target group. Time is measured in average minutes per week.

The sixth objective of the practicum was also achieved with a higher result than expected. Eleven out of 15 parents showed an increased enthusiasm of two points for reading aloud as tested on the IFRK post-test (see Table 8).

Table 8

Parents' Enthusiasm for Reading Aloud

	Target Group
Before Program	3.3
After Program	8.6

Note. There were 15 members in the target group. Enthusiasm was rated on a scale of one to ten.

Finally, the last behavioral objective was also met. Nine out of the 15 participants' children showed an increased enthusiasm of five points for being read to aloud (see Table 9).

Table 9

Children's Enthusiasm for Being Read to Aloud

	Target Group's Children
Before Program	8.6
After Program	12

Note. There were 15 children interviewed.

Conclusions

All seven of the behavioral objectives of the practicum were achieved. Such results indicate that by presenting workshops for parents will help them increase the amount of time that they read aloud to their children. Like Griffin's (1988) read aloud program, the writer's program was met with enthusiasm and excitement as well.

The parents appeared to be interested in the workshop

topics and learned much information as demonstrated on the IFRK post-test. Many voiced a tremendous enjoyment of reading aloud to the children in the class. The children seemed to enjoy the "change of pace" as well.

The community workers who came in to read to the children also revealed their enthusiasm. Some of them even asked if they could come back again. It would appear that the program fostered positive and satisfying feelings in all who were involved.

As Butler (1980) found even before a child says his first word, he is taking part in two-way communication. This process helps build language skills. Furthering these skills is possible by reading aloud to a child while also fostering an emotional relationship.

While the practicum emphasized the utilitarian aspects of reading aloud, Stewig (1980) found that reading aloud can also provide pleasurable experiences. A reading program may be based solely upon the pleasure and enjoyment of reading. With pleasure as the primary focus, skills and concepts may also be experienced without being the major goal.

Morrow (1982) found that children prefer varied story structures like those found in children's books. The writer employed this finding throughout the practicum program by offering the children a variety of books with many different

story structures which may be much more interesting than basal readers.

All in all, the presentation of workshops enhanced parents' knowledge of reading aloud. This, in turn, prompted the increase in the amount of time that parents read to their children. There was an overwhelming enthusiasm of all the people involved. The program met all of its objectives as well as creating a feeling of satisfaction among its participants.

Recommendations

1. When implementing this practicum, one should present the workshop phase with extreme enthusiasm. Perhaps the instructor's excitement will spark those involved.
2. A portion of the reading program will be continued in the writer's work setting by bringing in parent and community readers weekly.

Dissemination

The results of this practicum will be shared with interested colleagues at an informal meeting. The possibility of networking their reading times will be

discussed. Working together, the teachers can affect many of the children in the school.

The community readers' aspect of the practicum was such a positive one, that the possibility of bringing in more readers will be discussed. Since more people will be involved, more community contacts can be made.

Pamphlets of information will be shared with all interested parents as well as teachers. Information may also be disseminated in the school newspaper, perhaps in a "Reading Tip of the Week" column.

Word of mouth by the participating parents of the original practicum will probably prove strongest in getting other parents involved. Therefore, parent volunteer speakers will be invited to comment on the success of the program and why they feel others should join in on the fun.

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APPENDIX A

GENERAL SURVEY

* Age _____

* Sex _____

* Number of children you have _____

Ages _____

_____

_____

_____

* Do you read aloud to your children? _____

If yes, how often? _____

_____

_____

If no, why not? _____

_____

_____

APPENDIX B

KINDERGARTEN PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

* Age _____

* Sex _____

* Do you read aloud to your kindergarten child? _____

If yes, how often? _____

If no, why not? _____

_____

_____

_____

* If you currently do not read to your child, would you be interested in a school-based program designed to promote reading aloud to children?

_____

APPENDIX C

IT'S FUN TO READ TO YOUR KIDS

TAKE-HOME TEST

****

Name _____

1. List three values of reading aloud to your children.

   (a)

   (b)

   (c)

2. How many times have you accompanied your child to the school or public library during the program?

   _____

3. List three strategies for presenting literature to young children.

   (a)

   (b)

   (c)

4. List two questioning techniques presented at Workshop #3.

(a)

(b)

5. Time spent reading aloud to your child before the program.

_____

Time spent reading aloud to your child during the program.

_____

Was there an increase? _____

How much of an increase? _____

6. Write your feelings about the program.

* Was it worthwhile?
* What did you find most valuable?
* What do you feel was unimportant?
* Rate your enthusiasm for reading aloud on a scale of one to ten (ten being the most enthusiastic).

_____

APPENDIX D

ANSWERS TO IFRK

1. - increases listening skills
   - can motivate children to read
   - provides for a "personal time" for parent/child
   - language skills are increased
   - exposes children to experiences they may never get to have themselves
   - provides a good role model for children
   - increases children's understanding of the world

2. five or more times

3. - variations in speech tone
   - become familiar with the material before presentation
   - pause appropriately to maintain rhythmic quality
   - create rapport before reading
   - introduce story
   - define unfamiliar words
   - prevent disruptions
   - hold the book so the listener can see it

4. literal
   interpretive
   critical

5. an increase must be shown

6. an increase of two points must be shown

APPENDIX E

CHILDREN'S ENTHUSIASM RATING POINT SCALE

1. Do you like books?

2. Do you like for your mother/father to read to you?

3. Would you rather watch television with your mother/father or have them read to you?

APPENDIX F

CHILDREN'S ENTHUSIASM RATING POINT SCALE

Question #1

Yes = 5 points
No = 0 points

Question #2

Yes = 5 points
No = 0 points

Question #3

Read = 5 points
Television = 0 points

APPENDIX G

PARENT'S ENTHUSIASM RATING

Rate your enthusiasm for reading aloud on a scale of one to ten (ten being the most enthusiastic).

_____